

REMARKS

Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration of the present application in view of the foregoing amendments and the reasons that follow. The present amendments are presented in response to issues raised in the Final Office Action, and are respectfully submitted to place the application in condition for allowance. In particular, Applicant notes that the amendments merely cancel subject matter or rewrite dependent claims in independent form and do not require a new search. By the present communication, claims 21, 24, and 27 are currently being amended. Claims 12, 17, 18, 22, and 23 are cancelled without prejudice. Applicant reserves the right to present the cancelled claims in a continuing application. After amending the claims as set forth above, claims 20, 21, and 24-28 are now pending in this application.

I. Allowed Claims

As a preliminary matter, the Office Action indicates that claims 18 and 28 are allowed. However, the Office Action also indicates that claim 18 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103. Therefore, it is Applicant's understanding that claims 20 and 28 (and not claim 18) are allowed. Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner contact them as soon as possible if this understanding is incorrect.

II. Claim Amendments

In the Office Action, claims 22, 24, 25, 26, 27, and 28 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form, including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Applicant thanks the Examiner for indicating allowable subject matter. First, claim 21 has been amended to include all of the limitations of claim 22. Likewise, claims 24 and 27 have been amended to include all of the limitations of base claim 21. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully submits that amended independent claims 21, 24, and 27 (and claims depending therefrom) are now in condition for allowance. We note that claim 28 is an independent claim and was indicated in the Office Action as allowed. Therefore, this claim has not been rewritten.

III. Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. § 103

In the Office Action, claims 12, 17, 18, 21, and 23 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Barney, U.S. Patent 343,688 in view of Parks, U.S. 4,538,430. Claims 12, 17, 18, and 23 have been canceled and claim 21 has been amended to include the limitation of dependent claim 22. Applicants submit that, in view of the foregoing amendments, this rejection has been rendered moot. Therefore, Applicant respectfully requests withdrawal of the rejection.

IV. Conclusion

Applicant believes that the present application is now in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration of the application as amended is respectfully requested. The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned by telephone if it is felt that a telephone interview would advance the prosecution of the present application.

Respectfully submitted,

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